



Oberlin man sentenced to 17 years

By Ramell Taylor
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Dylan Coryell, found guilty of second-degree, nonpremeditated murder and aggravated battery on March 27, was sentenced Monday morning to a minimum of 15 years in prison during a hearing in Decatur County District Court.

Coryell, age 25, was convicted of murder for shooting Airman Cory Cook, 22, of Oberlin, in the head with a .410 shot-

gun and of aggravated assault for injuring Sarah Campbell the morning of Oct. 16, 2011.

Testimony at the trial showed that both men had relationships with Ms. Campbell, Cook before and after his Air Force training, and Coryell while the airman was gone.

The courtroom Monday was packed with family and friends. Judge Preston Pratt thanked the family and lawyers for both sides for



Dylan Coryell

showing restraint during the trial and sentencing.

Judge Pratt granted the state's request for an "upward departure" from sentencing guidelines set by law, increasing the prison term. Nicole Romine, an assistant attorney general stationed in Goodland, who tried the case for the state, said evidence supporting the request included:

- Coryell shot and killed Cook while he was sleeping, so the homicide

was committed when Cook was in a vulnerable state.

- Coryell created a knowing threat of death to more than one person, since Ms. Campbell and Cook were sleeping beside one another.

- The prosecution presented evidence that Coryell had a criminal background, having been convicted in Colorado of driving under the influence and another crime linked to alcohol. Coryell also was drinking the night of the shooting, she noted.

• The fact that Coryell drove 15 minutes to where Cook was, then murdered Cook after discovering he was asleep.

Defense attorney Justin Barrett had requested a downward departure, arguing that:

- Although Cook was vulnerable, sleep didn't facilitate commission of the crime.
- According to the text messages documented during the trial, Coryell and Cook only exchanged two text messages. Bar-

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Relay for Life to be Friday

The Thomas County Relay for Life fund raiser will run from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Friday through Saturday at Dennen Field, celebrating cancer survivors and raising money for the American Cancer Society.

A free dinner for survivors kicks off the event, followed by opening ceremonies at 7 p.m. At 8 p.m., survivors will walk a lap together, then caregivers will join them for another lap.

Luminaries, purchased in honor of in memory of cancer patients, will be lit in a ceremony at 9 p.m.

The event includes a silent auction open until 1 p.m. with items including gift baskets from area businesses, a metal Budweiser sign, a toy flag tractor from Colby

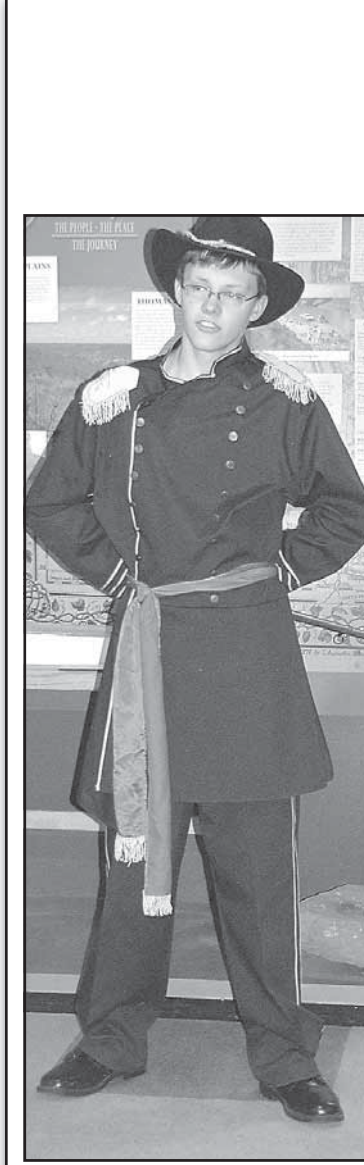
Ag and room nights at the Hampton Inn.

"We have a lot of neat silent auction items this year," said organizer Christy Gugelman.

The night's entertainment includes the Heinrich Brothers band, deejay Jeremy Blackwell, the Tumbleweed Tumblers and massages by Connie Menges. At 12:30 a.m., there will be bingo, bowling and a cakewalk.

Participants raise money for the society by soliciting donations from area residents and businesses. Awards will be given for teams and individuals who raised the most.

To donate or participate, call Gugelman at (308) 362-7122.



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press



Saturday accidents injure two travelers

Two people were hurt on Interstate 70 in separate accidents Saturday night, the first when a deer landed on her car, and the second in a four-car pileup.

A Baltimore woman tangled with the deer at 8:58 p.m. Saturday near Brewster, the Kansas Highway Patrol reported.

Valerie N. Tapsoba, 39, had just passed the Brewster exit going west when a deer jumped out of the median and landed on the windshield of her 2013 Mazda, crashing through the glass.

Tapsoba was treated at Citizens Medical Center here. A passenger, Yancy Curtis, 49, also of Baltimore, was uninjured. The patrol did not say if they were wearing seat belts.

Seven out of eight people in four vehicles escaped injury in a pileup Saturday night on the freeway east of Goodland.

The pileup started at 9:56 p.m. when blowing dust prompted Michael A. Circle, 55, West Milton,

Ohio, to slow down at mile marker 28.6, just east of the Edson exit. He was driving east. His 2008 Toyota was hit from behind by a 2011 U-haul truck driven by Katherine Kilbourne, 52, Aurora, Colo.

Circle was taken to the Goodland Regional Medical Center, where officials would not comment on his condition. Katherine Kilbourne and a child with her, Blade Kilbourne, were not hurt.

A second collision occurred when a 2005 Lexus driven by Dwight M Hall, 51, Longview, Texas, slowed down the check on the first two vehicles. The Lexus was struck in the side by a motorhome driven by Michael D. Peterson, 47, Gower, Mo.

No one in that wreck was hurt, including Hall and his passengers, Angela Y. Hall, 52, and Jesse Hall, 17, and Peterson and his passenger, Dyson J. Reno, 19, Gower.

The patrol reported that everyone involved was wearing a seat belt.



Night of history



A group of area kids brought the Prairie Museum or Art and History to life Friday evening. Chuck Bailey (above) played the part of Otis Rhoten, a blacksmith from Rexford, while Marion Talley – played by Cossette O'Brien (left) – posed next to one of her dresses. Nira Barricklow (far left) described the hard life of a French girl right after World War II and Brock O'Brien (above left), brother of Cossette O'Brien, dressed as the county's namesake, Gen. George Thomas, who led troops in the Civil War battle of Chickamauga.



Superintendent to retire from Golden Plains District

By Judy Rogers
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Golden Plains School District Superintendent Mary Ellen Welshhon will retire at the end of June after six years leading the district, which has schools in Rexford and Selden.

"Mrs. Welshhon came to Golden Plains in 2007, replacing the late Dr. Roger Baskerville," said board President Paul Bruggeman. "Mary Ellen has done an excellent job of managing our school and finances. We wish her the best

and thank her for the great job she has done for our schools."

Welshhon, who has served the district not only as superintendent, but as elementary and high school principal, was born and raised in Hoxie.

Following graduation from Hoxie High School, she attended the University of Missouri, Kansas City, where she received a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene. She worked for two years before obtaining a teaching license in 1971.

She began her career in education in Hutchinson before moving back to western Kansas and teaching in Park



M. Welshhon

for a year. She then taught third grade at Hoxie Elementary School from 1980 until 1998.

In 1992, she obtained a master's degree in special education. She added building leadership and district leadership certifications in 1999. Welshhon became assistant director of special education for the Northwest Kansas Education Service Center, where she served from 1998 to 2003. From 2003-2007, she was director of special education at the Learning Cooperative of North Central Kansas in Concordia before coming to Golden Plains in 2007.

During her time at Golden Plains, Welshhon led the staff in several improvement. She recruited teachers and staff to meet

JUDY ROGERS/Golden Plains Schools
Golden Plains Superintendent Mary Ellen Welshhon (left) visited with Maddix Green during a retirement reception following the Golden Plains Elementary Spring Concert in early May. Welshhon will retire from the district at the end of June after six years as superintendent.

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